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ABSTRACT

This paper reviews and synthesizes reports about family literacy programs and practices, focusing on outcomes for adult learners. Emphasis is on resources available in the ERIC database beginning in 1990. Section 1 on programs reviews sometimes conflicting definitions of family literacy and finds that a common thread is strengthening intergenerational literacy and preparing parents and caregivers for their role as children's first teachers. It discusses policy and funding issues at federal and state levels and addresses these three issues critical to family literacy program success: staff quality, curricular assumptions and instructional practices, and collaboration within and outside programs. Section 2 describes kinds of assessment models used for participants and programs and discusses these outcomes documented in research: increased adult academic, social, and job skills and employment possibilities; higher enrollment in early childhood education; gains in school readiness; parents as positive role models for doing academic work and persisting in the face of difficulties; children's increased interest in literacy activities; improved home literacy environments; and closer family relationships. Section 3 summarizes the findings by describing a prototype of a successful family literacy program and highlighting areas needing additional research. Appendixes include a research matrix with purpose, scope, and design of 35 studies; an annotated list of 21 family literacy websites; and a map of Even Start programs. (Contains 58 references.) (YLB)



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# A Decade of Family Literacy

## Programs, Outcomes, and the Future

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Information Series No. 389

# A Decade of Family Literacy: Programs, Outcomes, and Future Prospects

**Information Series No. 389**


by

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## Foreword

The Educational Resources Information Center Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (ERIC/ACVE) is 1 of 16 clearinghouses in a national information system that is funded by the Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education. This paper was developed to fulfill one of the functions of the clearinghouse—interpreting the literature in the ERIC database. This paper should be of interest to adult educators, family literacy practitioners, graduate students, and researchers.

ERIC/ACVE would like to thank Nancy Padak, Connie Sapin, and Dianna Baycich for their work in the preparation of this paper.

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Family literacy has been the focus of research and practice for at least the past 2 decades. Family literacy programs recognize the influence of parents on children's learning and the link among literacy interactions in the home, school, and community. They bring together both early childhood and adult literacy programs in a whole-family learning effort.

This paper reviews and synthesizes reports about family literacy programs and practices, focusing on outcomes for adult learners. The emphasis is on resources available in the ERIC database from 1990 to the present.

The first section, Programs, reviews the sometimes conflicting definitions of family literacy, finding that a common thread is strengthening intergenerational literacy and preparing parents and caregivers for their role as children's first teachers. Policy and funding issues at the federal and state levels are discussed. This section then addresses three overarching issues that are critical to the success of family literacy programs: the quality of staff, curricular assumptions and instructional practices, and collaboration within and outside programs.

The second section looks at outcomes, first describing the kinds of assessment models that have been used for participants and programs. Specific outcomes that have been documented in research are then discussed.

The third section summarizes the findings by describing a prototype of a successful family literacy program. Areas needing additional research are highlighted.

The paper contains three appendices. A research matrix in Appendix 1 presents the purpose, scope, and design of 35 studies. Appendix 2 contains an annotated list of family literacy websites. A map in Appendix 3 depicts the number and location of sites of Even Start programs in the United States.

Information on the topics in this paper may be found in the ERIC database using the following descriptors: *Adult Learning, Evaluation Methods, *Family Literacy, *Literacy Education, *Parent Child Relationship, *Parent Participation, Program Evaluation, and Student Evaluation. Asterisks indicate terms that are particularly relevant.

# Introduction and Overview

For at least the past 2 decades, educators, educational researchers, and other professionals who interact with families have become increasingly convinced that family literacy programs offer effective vehicles for educating both parents or other caregivers and their children. Literacy growth is now seen as cyclical, interactive, and intergenerational, a function of literacy interactions in the school, home, and community. But this has not always been the case. In an historical review of advice from educational methods texts about parents' roles in their children's schooling, Sturtevant and Linek (1995) note that in the first part of the 20th century, reading instruction "came to be viewed as a technical skill, requiring teaching and testing of isolated skills in a particular sequence. … Methods textbooks in this era prepared teachers for this technical task, with the implicit assumption that parents would not be knowledgeable enough to help" (p. 235).

Adding to the home-school disconnection was the prevailing view that children's reading readiness was solely a function of their mental ages, as determined by newly available IQ tests. For example, one methods text from the late 1940s warned: "Parents … will find it hard to realize that irreparable harm might be done to their child if he is forced to tackle that job [reading] before reliable tests indicate that he is ready to do so" (Sturtevant and Linek 1995, p. 235). Moreover, poverty and linguistic and cultural differences among families were seen as deficits, often indicative of low intelligence and always detrimental to children's school achievement. Two examples from methods texts published in 1970 illustrate this belief (both from Sturtevant and Linek 1995, p. 238): "Children who come from homes of low cultural level do not have normal opportunities to develop an adequate language background. … They often find it hard to progress in reading even when they have normal intelligence. If they are dull—and many of them are—they are doubly handicapped." "Less privileged children … have lower IQs, are less proficient in language … and are less interested in school. … Their cultural horizons rarely extend beyond city alleys and, because of this, they cannot bring meaningful concepts to the symbols on the printed page."

Views about family literacy and parents' involvement in children's education have changed radically in the past 30 years. Although a detailed examination of reasons for this change is beyond the scope of this monograph, two important influences deserve note. First, research into young children's literacy abilities showed adults in the home and home-based literacy practices to be important influences on children's development as readers and writers. Dolores Durkin's classic study, ***Children Who Read Early*** (1966), and subsequent work by a variety of scholars interested in what is now called the "emergent literacy" perspective helped to dismiss prevailing notions that home literacy interactions should be avoided. A second critical influence was the emergence of federal programs beginning with President Lyndon Johnson's War on Poverty, which established Head Start and Title I. These programs also paved the way for different thinking about homes and schools, about parents, children, teachers, and literacy learning.

Meanwhile, adult educators were seeking program designs to foster retention and academic achievement, and programs for parents that focused on children's school achievement appeared to meet both these goals. The PACE (Parent and Child Education) program in Kentucky, thought to be the first family literacy program supported with public funds (Peyton 1990), was used as a model for a new federal initiative, Even Start. Attention to family literacy has grown steadily since the late 1980s.

Our purpose in this monograph is to review and synthesize published reports about family literacy programs and practices, focusing particularly on outcomes for adult learners. To do this, we have relied almost entirely on resources available in the ERIC database, from 1990 to the present. Our intent has been to complement other comprehensive and critical summaries of family literacy research (e.g., Nickse 1990) by focusing on work published in the past decade. We selected resources in the ERIC database because of their wide availability.

Although arguments for different types of search parameters could certainly be made, we used sources from a search for U.S.-based family literacy research. We hoped that the search would yield resources that, in turn, would allow us to draw evidence-based conclusions of use to family literacy practitioners. However, the search yielded many resources (about 35%) that offered no written descriptions of the research studies upon which they were based. For example, an author might make reference to a study but not include any information about its design in the written report. To assist researchers and others interested in evidence-based conclusions, we created a table (see Appendix 1) to summarize information about the purpose, scope, and design of the 35 research studies yielded by the search.

The monograph is organized into three major sections. The first, "Programs," begins with a review of definitions of family literacy, followed by a discussion of policy and funding issues. Next, we consider three matters that appear critical to family literacy program success: staffing, curriculum and instruction, and collaboration.

The second section, "Outcomes," begins with a discussion of assessment models, both formative and summative, that have been used in family literacy programs. Documented family-literacy-related outcomes for adults, children, and schools and communities are then summarized. In a section called "The Future," we use conclusions from this research review to suggest directions for future family literacy efforts and to identify issues deserving research. The monograph concludes with a bibliography and an appendix of useful websites.

# Programs

## Definitions—What *Is* Family Literacy?

Family literacy is a complex concept with multiple dimensions; as a result it can be defined in many ways. Before defining *family literacy*, a general definition of *literacy* would be helpful. *Literacy* has been defined as a social and cultural phenomenon that develops and is practiced in the context of social interactions for social purposes (Elish-Piper 1996-97) across the lifespan; by perspectives that focus on its many uses and purposes; as a range of reading, writing, and problem-solving activities and abilities; as a developmental and social process for children and adults; as acts occurring in a variety of cultural contexts and developed in different social settings (e.g., school, home, community, and workplace); and as learning for personal development and preparation for life transitions (Goldsden, Schefter, and Hardman 1994).

Drawing on these definitions of literacy and on the work of sociologists and anthropologists who studied the concept of family (Nistler and Maiers 1999), family literacy recognizes parents as the child's first teacher and considers the literacy of the parent to be crucial to the development of the literacy of the child (Anderson 1994). Family literacy can be thought of as the set of oral, graphic, and symbolic means by which family members exchange and retain information and meaning. It can also be thought of as the general level at which family members use their writing, reading, computing, communication, and problem-solving skills to accomplish the various tasks of their daily lives (Benjamin and Lord 1996).

Family literacy encompasses the way parents and family members use literacy at home and in their communities. Family literacy occurs naturally during the routines of daily living and helps adults and children get things done. Families can use literacy spontaneously as they go about their daily lives, or a parent or other family member may initiate literacy activities (DeBruin-Parecki, Paris, and Seidenberg 1997).

The concept of family literacy encompasses all literacy activities that take place within the home, not just school-like activities. The International Reading Association's Family Literacy Commission considers not only literacy but also types of families and family context when describing family literacy. The commission recommended that family literacy be thought of as a complex concept associated with many different beliefs about the relationships between families and literacy. These beliefs are as follows: families can be both mainstream and nonmainstream; literacy goes beyond school-based activities into the daily functional use of literacy by families; family literacy activities reflect the ethnic, racial, and cultural heritages of families; and family literacy efforts can be initiated by organizations outside of families (Morrow, Tracey, and Maxwell 1995). The outside organizations the commission mentions are those that provide family literacy programs and activities.

## Programs

Family literacy programs are organized efforts to improve the literacy levels of educationally disadvantaged parents and children (Nickse 1990). Since each family literacy program adapts its goals and services to the population it serves as well as to different definitions of family literacy, there are a wide variety of family literacy programs in many different settings (DeBruin-Parecki et al. 1997). Some programs may focus on children's K-12 academic success with parents seen as agents for promoting their children's success in school. Other programs may work with family members to improve their literacy so they can meet their own personal and family goals (Gadsden et al. 1994). Still other family literacy programs may focus on the family as a unit, they may focus on a family member and hope the individual will carry benefits to others in the family, or they may work with parents and children separately (Puchner 1993; Purcell-Gates 1993). Many programs focus on parent involvement with the schools as a way for parents to support their children's learning and success as well as to improve their own literacy (Handel 1996). Although family literacy programs vary in design, most share a philosophy that literacy improvement is best accomplished through a shared social process (Nickse 1990).

Nickse (1990) developed a typology to explain and categorize the various designs of family literacy programs. In Type 1 programs, *direct adult-direct children*, educationally disadvantaged adults and their children attend the program together. In Type 2, *indirect adult-indirect children*, adults and children participate together in family literacy activities, such as book talks or read-aloud sessions at public libraries. Type 3 programs, *direct adult-indirect children*, focus on improving the literacy abilities of adults with the belief that the adults, in turn, will positively influence their children's literacy acquisition. In Type 4 programs, *indirect adult-direct children*, the children are the main focus for literacy instruction with adult involvement encouraged but optional.

Family literacy programs often take into account the cultural background of the families involved in the program. Programs then plan activities around the needs and goals the families have identified while building on the families' strengths (Association for Community Based Education 1993; Griswold and Ullman 1997). In addition to improving families' literacy skills, family literacy scholars such as Elsa Auerbach and Vivian Gadsden believe family literacy programs should help empower families to become active in their communities and to create changes in schools as a means to improve their children's academic achievement (Roth, Myers-Jennings, and Stowell 1997).

Whatever family literacy programs look like, they often have many things in common. Their main goal is to improve the literacy of educationally disadvantaged parents and children and to break the cycle of educational difficulties by providing multiple tools that parents and children can use to improve their literacy (Anderson 1994). To accomplish this, they provide parents with opportunities to acquire basic skills and information about child development (Peyton 1990). In essence, family literacy programs are those programs in which parents or other family members learn why and how to support their children's literacy at home (Benjamin and Lord 1996; Rodriguez-Brown, Li, and Albom 1999).

Comprehensive family literacy programs generally have at least the following four components:

1. Adult basic education for adult family members to improve their basic skills, obtain their General Educational Development certificates (GEDs) and learn skills for the workplace
2. Early childhood education for the children to learn skills to help them achieve in school
3. Parent education where adult family members discuss parenting practices, nutrition, the importance of literacy experiences for their children and other topics important to the family members
4. Parent and child together time (PACT) for the adults and the children to participate together in literacy activities that the families can also do at home

These four components are offered in an integrated manner with the intensity and duration needed to make lasting changes in the families involved (Anderson 1994; Peyton 1999; Yaffe and Williams 1998).

Benjamin and Lord (1996) report the results of a national symposium of family literacy professionals. Persons attending the symposium proposed these characteristics as critical to family literacy programs:

- Offer literacy development for parents and children
- Integrate learning and participation on three levels: parents, children, and parents and children together
- Include parent and child interactions
- Serve as an extension of the family, recognizing individual differences
- Include strong participant involvement in all aspects of the program
- Define family broadly to include children and caregivers
- Address long-term student goals
- Establish a designated time and a process for parent support systems
- Integrate core instructional components, program services, and staff development
- Offer program goals that consider other agencies and support systems and offer links to other services
- Offer ongoing monitoring of quality by all stakeholders

Even though families, family literacy, and family literacy programs have been defined in different and sometimes conflicting ways, the common thread that runs through all family literacy programs is to strengthen intergenerational literacy and help parents or caregivers learn that they are their children's first teachers and that they can be successful in this role.

## Policy and Funding

In the United States, some federal appropriations go directly to family literacy programs. In other cases, federal dollars are provided to states, which in turn distribute them to programs. Federal money has been the primary source of fiscal support for family literacy

programs (Morrow et al. 1995). Perhaps the best example of this federal support is Even Start, first enacted in 1988 as a federal demonstration project through the Hawkins-Stafford Elementary and Secondary Education Improvement Act. The National Literacy Act of 1991 amended Even Start by broadening the types of eligible recipients and refining eligibility requirements (Anderson 1994). Other family literacy-related legislation from the early 1990s included the Head Start Family Literacy Initiative, part of the Head Start Act of 1991, and FACE (Family and Child Education Program), sponsored by the Bureau of Indian Affairs. Beginning in 1991, FACE supported family literacy programs on five Native American reservations (Anderson 1994).

Even Start has now persisted for more than a decade. Over this period, federal appropriations for Even Start have steadily increased. Moreover, subsequent federal legislation for other educational initiatives has reflected increased attention to family literacy. For example, the 105th Congress addressed family literacy in the Workforce Investment Act, the Head Start Act, the Community Services Block Grant, and the Reading Excellence Act (Peyton 1999). Additionally, family literacy programs have been tied to the Library Services and Construction Act (Titles I and VI) and several programs in the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, including Chapter I/Title I, Title VII Bilingual Education, and Title III, Part B, the Family School Partnership Program (Benjamin and Lord 1996). In 2001, the most recent reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act, the No Child Left Behind Act, continues the federal focus on family literacy. (See website in Appendix 2 for more information.)

Continued federal support for family literacy initiatives has helped to legitimize the concept of family literacy and educational programs aimed at families as units rather than adults as parents or children as literacy learners. Moreover, federal legislation has served to draw educators' attention to the concept of family literacy. Those working in federally funded Head Start and Title I programs, for example, are now required to work toward family literacy goals, which tend to be more focused and prescriptive than the parental involvement requirements in previous legislation.

In 1995, Morrow et al. noted, "While family literacy has enjoyed wide success at the federal level, state governments have been slower to financially support these initiatives.... It has been suggested that this hesitancy stems not from a lack of philosophical support regarding the importance or effectiveness of family literacy programs, but from a lack of financial resources available for such endeavors" (pp. 5-6). Although more up-to-date information about the fiscal support family literacy receives from state governments is not yet available in the ERIC system, Peyton's (1999) comprehensive report of states' efforts to support family literacy written for the National Center for Family Literacy suggests that fiscal issues may persist. At least two states (Colorado and Louisiana) have passed legislation encouraging or requiring family literacy efforts without appropriations to fund efforts. In other cases (e.g., Arizona, Washington), lack of administrative funding has diminished opportunities for program evaluation, statewide professional development efforts, or state-level oversight.

Peyton's report chronicles 11 states' efforts to develop state-funded family literacy programs: Arizona, Colorado, Hawaii, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maryland, Massachusetts, Nevada, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, and Washington. Although each effort has been unique, comparisons among states identify several features common to successful efforts, such as—

- The need to educate key personnel so that interested and affected parties see family literacy programs as a solution to educational and social problems rather than just another program competing for limited funds. Peyton notes that successful state efforts have had strong leadership from governors, education administrators, and/or legislators.

- The importance of carefully drafted legislation in support of family literacy efforts. Legislation should include definitions, eligibility requirements, evaluation and training components, funding mechanisms, and administrative structure. Peyton notes that successful legislative presentations reflect the "climate" and priorities of the legislature.

- Adequate funding and support for initial efforts. Peyton advises fewer programs with sufficient funding rather than stretching an appropriation too thinly. Demonstration projects are useful for building community awareness. Moreover, Peyton notes that literacy commissions or advisory committees create effective forums for advocacy.

A fair amount of collaboration, usually between or among state agencies, is evident in these descriptions of state-sponsored family literacy efforts as well. In some cases (e.g., South Carolina), collaboration is required. Other states (e.g., Arizona, Pennsylvania) strongly encourage collaboration or offer competitive advantages to projects that feature collaboration. It is apparent that collaboration among state agencies and corporations (e.g., Hawaii) with interest in families represents fairly common practice, although the degree of collaboration appears "to depend more on individual state histories" (Peyton 1999, p. 37).

Those interested in addressing family literacy policy at the state level or implementing statewide efforts may find some guidance from reports of other statewide initiatives. In addition, Knell and Geissler (1992) have outlined a model for developing statewide family literacy policy based on their work in Illinois. They suggest beginning with information sharing that focuses on national and private family literacy initiatives as well as other statewide efforts. Next, state-specific issues, including the strengths and weaknesses of other state-supported programs for families, should be identified. Development of a mission statement follows, after which goal statements related to the mission are drafted. Components of the family literacy program (e.g., adult, child, family interactions) must be defined and agreed upon. Finally, governance issues need to be determined and state-level support needs to be sought.

Despite the promise of state and federal support for family literacy efforts, several problems in these new efforts are apparent. For example, states vary in their decisions about where to house programs within state departments of education—with adult education (Kentucky, Colorado, Pennsylvania), with early childhood education (Nevada, South

Carolina), with elementary and secondary education (Louisiana), with community education and technical education (Washington), or with state libraries (Hawaii, Illinois) (Knell and Geissler 1992; Peyton 1999).

Each decision about location appears to carry both advantages and disadvantages. Family literacy programs housed with adult education programs, for example, have the advantage of connections to other programs for adults, often including work force education, but the disadvantage of isolation from K-12 efforts. Perhaps these location difficulties are a function of the goodness of fit between family literacy and existing state educational bureaucracies. No state educational agencies yet focus on families as units, so family literacy doesn't "fit" completely anywhere. This problem will, most likely, need to be addressed if family literacy programs are to survive and thrive in state educational systems for, as Peyton (1999) notes, programs tend to assume the focus of the administering agency.

As noted earlier, adequate funding is another problem for many family literacy programs and initiatives. In addition, whether public funding comes from states or the federal government, funders' reporting requirements may influence program quality. Elish-Piper (2000) explored critical issues related to program reform in the adult education portion of nearly 70 family literacy programs in the Midwest. Program directors reported that funders' requirements presented obstacles to their efforts to offer transformative, responsive curricula for parents attending their programs. In particular, directors believed that the emphasis on quick GED attainment, required documentation of growth through standardized tests, and mandates about types of services offered impeded program quality. Elish-Piper concluded that it may become necessary to help funders embrace a transformative view of literacy, not just a school-based one. "Until programs can overcome funders' rigid expectations that GEDs must be earned within a specified time frame and standardized tests are the best way to measure growth, responsive literacy education for adults in family literacy programs may be challenging, if not impossible" (p. 197).

## Issues

In this section we address three overarching issues related to family literacy programming: the qualities and characteristics of effective staff members; information about curriculum and instruction, including curricular assumptions, instructional practices, and descriptions of programs for particular groups of families; and collaboration, both external and internal to programs. Within each topic, our intent is to summarize findings from studies reported in the ERIC database with particular focus on "what works." Where appropriate, we also identify common stressors or issues that provided challenges or barriers to program success.

### *Family Literacy Staff*

Who should staff family literacy programs? Resources in the ERIC database address several issues regarding staff: their educational backgrounds, their personal or profes-

sional characteristics, and their professional development needs. With regard to educational credentials, variety is advised. DeBruin-Parecki et al. (1997), for example, suggest that an ideal staff may be composed of persons with expertise in adult education, early childhood education, elementary education, community education, social work, and educational administration. They also note that expertise should be sought from the community at large, a point underscored by Griswold and Ullman (1997), who found that employing women from the community as family workers was essential to the success of their program. An average Even Start family literacy program funds a staff of 10: 1 project administrator, 3-4 teachers, 1-2 teachers' aides, 1 family specialist, 1 support service provider, 1 evaluator, and 1 administrative assistant (Tao, Gamse, and Tarr 1998).

Personal and professional qualities play a role in effective staffing for family literacy programs. Teachers must be willing to take risks (Rasinski and Padak 1995). Teamwork and collaboration are noted as important qualities. Staff stability is an important characteristic of effective family literacy programs, as is the mutual respect among members of staff teams (Anderson 1994; DeBruin-Parecki et al. 1997).

Sensitivity to cultural issues is also noted; as Anderson (1994) remarks, parenting is not the same in all cultures. Indeed, staff qualities such as personal involvement, attitude toward families, and ability to offer effective and innovative instruction have been found to be characteristics of successful programs (Nurss and Singh 1993).

Regardless of initial staff certification, most authors of work reviewed for this monograph agree that staff will need to learn a great deal about literacy and families as programs evolve (DeBruin-Parecki et al. 1997). Many family literacy teachers are trained in other fields, so they may not be aware of the theoretical and research base for programs (Elish-Piper 2000). Even those with preparation in one family literacy-related field (e.g., adult education) will need to learn about other perspectives (e.g., early childhood education).

For these reasons, among others, ongoing, intensive professional development has been cited as critical to program effectiveness, especially as programs begin. In their study of start-up concerns in several Even Start programs, Rasinski and Padak (1994) found program self-studies and development of action plans to be good tools for getting everyone "on the same page." Team sessions were most effective.

Authors of material in the ERIC database agree that professional development needs to be particularly intense as programs are planned and initiated. Neuman (1995) notes that initial professional development sessions might focus on levels of expectation, the nature of successful interactions among teachers and parents, and how to involve nonreading parents in program activities. Early sessions may also provide an overview of family literacy, a discussion of adults as learners, an examination of the reading process, information about child development and emergent literacy, and exploration of effective teaching methods (Van Horn, Ovaert, and Askov 1992). Teachers are often culturally, racially, and economically different from their students. Without adequate professional development to explore the meaning of these differences, programs may be characterized by the im-

plicit expectation that the goal is for parents to change to become like teachers. Thus, cultural awareness and understanding of diversity as applied to family life often need attention in early professional development sessions (Benjamin and Lord 1996).

Subsequent professional development should aim to provide staff with skills and strategies for teaching basic skills through family-relevant materials and helping parents create positive learning environments in their homes (Van Horn et al. 1992). Staff members need to understand the significance of making reading and writing meaningful (Griswold and Ullman 1997). Staff development might also focus on the curriculum and instructional implications of a responsive, social-constructive view of literacy (Elish-Piper 2000).

Professional development sessions should evolve out of staff questions and observations about their work (Griswold and Ullman 1997). Moreover, all staff members should be involved in professional development opportunities. This serves to support the development of a family literacy team (Rasinski and Padak 1994), seen as a long-term benefit. In addition, some staff members, such as community liaisons or family workers, may have varying educational experiences and may not initially view themselves as readers, writers, or teachers (Griswold and Ullman 1997). Programs will be most effective if everyone involved sees himself/herself as participating in the educational mission of the project.

Professional development opportunities for teachers of school-aged children appear to hold promise as vehicles for promoting family literacy and home-school partnerships. Ruth Handel (1996), long a leader in family literacy innovations, reports the effects of experiential professional development workshops for 90 K-3 teachers from 34 schools over 1987-95. The workshop model consisted of 3 days of training complemented by onsite consultation and assistance as teacher participants conducted their own parent workshops. The model worked particularly well, especially in achieving two program goals—increased staff expertise in working with parents and closer home-school relationships. Teacher participants reported that the project had influenced their relationships with parents—they gained competency as parent educators; learned how to make parents feel welcome in school; believed they established partnerships with parents; and facilitated parents' engagement in reading, writing, and other subjects. They also gained knowledge of children's literature, self-assurance in public speaking, and confidence for initiating Family Reading programs in nonschool settings. Teachers believed parents developed greater understanding of school and became more comfortable interacting with school personnel.

Several "stressors" related to family literacy staff issues have been identified. Many cited inadequate professional development as a staff-related problem (Association for Community Based Education 1993; Benjamin and Lord 1996; Elish-Piper 2000; Rasinski and Padak 1994). One finding from a study of almost 70 Midwest family literacy programs, for example, was that staff development was meager and often focused on training teachers to implement specific programs rather than educating them broadly (Elish-Piper 2000). Such practices may lead to program difficulties, since teachers are generally not involved in grant writing, policy and procedures development, or even materials selection but are expected to implement programs (Elish-Piper 2000).

Lack of appropriate levels of professional development is seen as related to underfunding, another "stressor" noted by authors of material in the ERIC database. Too little funding leads to understaffing with one person sometimes responsible for teaching, planning, and administrative duties (Association for Community Based Education 1993; Benjamin and Lord 1996). Understaffing may lead to program difficulties, too, as research is clear that a good deal of planning and coordination is necessary at all phases of a program's life but especially at start-up (Rasinski and Padak 1993, 1995).

Reports available in the ERIC database leave no doubt that staffing considerations are a primary reason for the success or failure of family literacy programs. Initial staff selection is critical, and ongoing, intensive professional development is essential. All aspects of these staff-related issues are related to adequate funding for family literacy programs.

## *Curriculum and Instruction*

In concluding their study of 50 family literacy programs in Michigan, DeBruin-Parecki et al. (1997) identified six factors that were critical to program success, one of which addressed curriculum and instruction: "Curriculum is best when it increases self-efficacy through successful learning experiences and builds bridges between parents, teachers, and children, as well as between home and school" (p. 603). As might be expected, much of the research available in the ERIC database addresses issues related to curricular principles or assumptions underlying family literacy programs and their corresponding instructional practices. Findings related to these two issues begin this section. The one study addressing families with special needs is presented next, and a section describing programs for specific ethnic and or cultural groups follows.

### Curricular Assumptions

Stance toward families is perhaps the most basic assumption involved in family literacy programming. Morrow et al. (1995) caution that too many family literacy programs are based on a "deficit" model, which features one-way transmission of information (e.g., from teachers to parents or children, from parents to children) and often carries with it, even implicitly, assumptions about the deficiency of undereducated families.

The "wealth" model, on the other hand, is based on the assumptions that all families have strengths and intact literacy patterns in their homes and that all families bring positive attributes and traits to the learning situation (Morrow et al. 1995). Also called a "strengths" model, this assumption regarding families' stances in programs results in adults feeling that they are valued, which, in turn, motivates them to learn and to help their children learn (Anderson 1994). Becher (1984, in Henderson and Berla 1994) adds several other characteristics of this stance toward parents, which her review found essential to effective parent education programs: All parents care about their children; all parents contribute to their children's education; all parents have insights about their children that are important to teachers; parent-child relationships are different from teacher-child relationships.

## Programs

Authors of material in the ERIC database recommend that programs be built on the wealth or strengths model and suggest several basic assumptions about program planning that can help to realize it:

- Curriculum must be shaped by participants' knowledge, experiences, and interests (Anderson 1994; Association for Community Based Education 1993; Benjamin and Lord 1996; Miller 1999; Nistler and Maiers 1999; Rasinski and Padak 1995; Van Horn et al. 1992). This stance brings with it some possible frustrations, such as tension between learner-oriented curricula and accountability to funders (Miller 1999), but authors clearly recommend participatory learning experiences.

- Curriculum integration promotes participants' literacy learning and improves attitudes toward reading and writing (Anderson 1994; Benjamin and Lord 1996; Rasinski and Padak 1995; Van Horn et al. 1992). This integration occurs not only among the language arts, but also by using outside-the-classroom issues as the focus for instruction (Anderson 1994; Benjamin and Lord 1996; Rasinski and Padak 1995; Roth et al. 1997; Van Horn et al. 1992).

- The instructional atmosphere is important. This includes building and maintaining relationships of understanding and trust among participants and between adults and their teachers (Association for Community Based Education 1993; Benjamin and Lord 1996; DeBruin-Parecki et al. 1997). Flexible, nonthreatening structures and support services are another aspect of the instructional atmosphere (Association for Community Based Education 1993).

Programs based on these assumptions are more likely to achieve their goals than programs based on deficit models, yet program planners must move beyond the mere articulation of curricular assumptions. Elish-Piper (2000) studied family literacy programs throughout the Midwest. She found that most programs sought to provide responsive, strengths-based programming, but their definitions of what this was varied widely. For example, almost one-third of the programs she studied used "real-life" issues for instructional purposes, but these were almost always selected by the teacher. Moreover, she noted few ongoing opportunities for parents to be involved in curriculum development. "Many programs seemed unable to move beyond the collection of information about family strengths, needs, and goals to building a program that incorporates such attributes" (p. 191).

This finding may be related to some or all of the "stressors" or potential threats to high-quality family literacy curricula. In reporting results of a national symposium about family literacy, Benjamin and Lord (1996) identified understaffing, lack of effective planning and evaluation, inadequate professional development, and lack of cultural awareness and understanding as particularly worrisome. Elish-Piper (2000) noted that teachers in the programs she studied had little access to authentic materials and limited access to the World Wide Web (or even computers). DeBruin-Parecki et al. (1997) found lack of theoretical support for activities, outdated materials, mismatches between instruction and assessment, inadequately prepared staff, and high staff turnover to be associated with

negative outcomes in Michigan's family literacy programs. These issues, which exist at the intersection of curriculum and instruction, suggest the complexity of program planning and delivery.

### Instructional Programs and Practices

Descriptions of programs and practices available in the ERIC system can provide direction for others planning family literacy programs. Some of these descriptions qualify as general advice, such as the observation that long-term discussion groups are more powerful than direct instruction in changing parents' beliefs and practices, advice to target parenting information to a specific child and or circumstance rather than provide general information, or the suggestion to use such technology as videotaping and computers (Benjamin and Lord 1996). In some cases, curriculum designs or frameworks are described (Anderson 1994; Association for Community Based Education 1993; Paratore 1992). In still other cases, program components were developed to meet unanticipated needs. For example, Roth et al. (1997) formed a parent organization to handle behavioral issues that arose in a family literacy program. The parent group was so successful mediating problems that they eventually shared information with others through a newsletter.

Two studies about dialog journals (Elish-Piper 1996-97; Linder and Elish-Piper 1995) demonstrate their effectiveness in providing parents with opportunities to share and voice concerns about their children, their life struggles, and their learning. Women in these family literacy programs found the journals a safe forum for "thinking in print" regarding their goals and for discussing serious, life-changing events. Some of these issues can then be used as a context for family literacy programming. As Linder and Elish-Piper note, "By listening to what learners have to say, family literacy educators and researchers may be better able to design and evaluate responsive programs" (p. 322).

Several other specific instructional routines are summarized in the section that addresses programming for particular ethnic or cultural groups. Other examples of routines include library-based programs (Van Horn et al. 1992), a Reading Partners program for preschool children and their mothers (DeBruin-Parecki et al. 1997), and a Basketball Literacy program, a Saturday morning progr im for fathers and their children (DeBruin-Parecki et al. 1997).

Even Start requires occasional visits to participating families' homes. These visits allow individual attention to children, provide adults with opportunities to discuss issues related to their own families in relative confidence, and foster transfer of literacy support activities from the classroom to the home. Surprisingly, only three citations in the ERIC database addressed this common component of family literacy programming. In one case (Bauernfeind 1990), the visits seemed designed primarily to check that parents were using the materials provided during preschool training programs.

Home visits may be a particularly important facet of family literacy programs for reasons outlined by Anderson, Fagin, and Cronin (1998), who found that some parents in their program were concerned about the messiness of writing and drawing at home and that

others didn't see the point of literacy-enriched play. Both these concerns, which could be alleviated through home visits, impeded program implementation. On the issue of transfer, Anderson et al. note, "If the task does not come 'naturally' to the parents, and the parents view it as an 'interruption' of their lives, it may not lead to the intended outcomes" (p. 278).

Crawford's (1995) work demonstrates the significance of combining home visits with one-on-one tutoring for a young struggling reader. The purposes of the home visits were to increase the print environment and to increase at-home interactions with print, both reading and writing. She provided a "writing box" for the family, which contained paper, pens, pencils, scissors, crayons, magazines, and newspapers. She encouraged the family to add materials to the box (e.g., junk mail) or to delete unused materials and to use the materials to promote the child's literacy. The family also read books together and created their own books following patterns developed by other authors. They recorded their literacy activities in a family portfolio, a collection of artifacts selected by the family to represent their literacy interactions. During occasional family conferences, family members described literacy interactions and raised problems or issues that needed information, discussion, or resolution.

Despite this paucity of research about home visits, they have potential to support family literacy program goals. Through effective home visitations, adults can learn to use their homes as learning centers in which to develop literacy learning opportunities for their children. Moreover, diverse learning contexts (e.g., school and home) enable participants to experience the power of shared learning in different ways (Griswold and Ullman 1997). This is clearly an area deserving additional inquiry.

### Special Needs

Only one study in the ERIC database addressed family literacy programs for parents or children with special needs (Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf 1992). This work was designed, in part, to identify the literacy needs of families with deaf parents and hearing children. Among the challenges noted were atypical auditory and print environments for children, which were thought to affect their early reading experiences, difficulties in child care management due to limited access to information and parent-child miscommunication, and communication difficulties with health care and service providers. Clearly, family literacy research must expand to include explorations of effective programming for parents and or children with special needs.

### Family Literacy and Ethnic or Cultural Groups

Several studies in the ERIC database address curricular and instructional aspects of family literacy programs that serve families of particular ethnic or cultural groups. The following list provides citations for these studies:

- African-American: Neuman 1995, 1996; Yaffe and Williams 1998
- Latino/a: Griswold and Ullman 1997; Neuman 1995, 1996; Quintero 1999;

Rodriguez-Brown, Li, and Allsom 1999 [Mexican-born]
- Native American: Iglitzin and Wandschneider 1993-94
- Southeast Asian: Puchner 1997; Quintero 1999 [Hmong]
- Bilingual/Multilingual: Paratore 1992; Thornburg 1993
- "Minority": Morrow and Young 1996, 1997

The relative paucity of descriptions of family literacy programs for persons of particular ethnic or cultural groups suggests a need for additional research in this area. Nevertheless, some curricular and instructional suggestions arising from this body of work provides at least initial guidance for other program planners. Summaries of relevant curricular and or instructional issues, arranged according to the ethnic or cultural group of participating families, follow.

Yaffe and Williams (1998) interviewed several African-American participants in a family literacy program as well as the program's staff members in an effort to identify "best practices." They found several factors related to participation and persistence in the programs: personal investment in instructional projects, curriculum perceived as relevant to the women's lives, a learning environment viewed as more sensitive to women's needs than traditional classrooms, a supportive atmosphere of trust "by women for women" (p. 13), and easily accessible transportation. They also found factors that impeded women's participation: misunderstanding of the concept of *family* literacy; perceiving PACT (Parents and Children Together) time as "playing," which is appropriate for children only; and seeing family literacy programs as "free babysitting."

Neuman (1995, 1996) described the Families Reading Together project, primarily designed for African-American and Latino/a parents and their Head Start children. Overall, the project was designed to develop a model of age-appropriate literacy activities for low-income families in Pennsylvania. One program component was adult basic education with a participatory format in which students identified issues, developed materials, and engaged in self-assessment. Another was the Family Literacy Book Club, which offered adults the opportunity to read together to improve their confidence and reading skills. A five-part routine characterized Book Club sessions: (1) teacher presents a genre of children's literature and introduces a children's book from that genre; (2) adults read the book chorally with the teacher reading along and modeling discussion possibilities; (3) adults discuss their goals for reading the book with their children and brainstorm the kinds of questions they might ask; (4) adults prepare for reading the book at home with children; and (5) they do so and then report about the experience at their next Book Club session.

The FLITE (Family Literacy Through Education) project, a partnership between a school district and a college in the Bronx, serves predominantly Latinas (Griswold and Ullman 1997). The program is based on two fundamental curriculum beliefs: that learning experiences can be generative and that the range of purposes for literate behavior is broad. Program components center on real-life issues and questions; discussion and text negotiation are prominently featured. Home visits are a key component of the program as well; parents learn to view their homes as learning centers in which to develop literacy learning

opportunities for themselves and their children. Griswold and Ullman note the importance of diverse learning contexts, which enable participants to experience the power of shared learning in different ways.

Based in Chicago, the FLAME (Family Literacy: Aprendiendo, Mejorando, Educando [Learning, Improving, Educating]) project is designed to support Mexican-born mothers and their children (Rodriguez-Brown et al. 1999). The project is designed to foster literacy opportunities, modeling, interactions, and home-school relations. Instruction focuses on the relationship between adults' experiences in the program and their ability to enhance their children's literacy learning.

Quintero (1999) studied the FIEL (Family Initiative for English Literacy) program in two settings: in El Paso, Texas, for Latinas and their children and in Duluth, Minnesota, for Hmong women and their children. Each program is a collaborative effort among Head Start, universities, and the participating families. The programs are based on curricular assumptions about both childrearing and children's second-language learning. Regarding the former, FIEL proponents believe that guidelines for developmentally appropriate practice fail to take into account cultural differences in childrearing practices. Consequently, tensions may arise as a result of home-school disparities, which family members need to learn to negotiate. Regarding the latter, Quintero notes, "literacy communication in [children's] first and second languages is closely tied to complex cognitive functioning" (p. 488) and cautions that no evidence exists that native language instruction is harmful for children. Indeed, if second language learning is "forced" too early, children lose their first languages, and family communication suffers. Accordingly, children select the language they wish to use; Quintero notes that they are comfortable code-switchers. Instruction in the FIEL program, which consists of a series of learner-generated thematic lessons, is based on these assumptions. Each lesson begins with initial inquiry, which is followed by a concrete, hands-on learning activity. Next, family teams complete a related language experience activity. Storybook reading and demonstrations follow, after which adults generate possible at-home activity suggestions.

Puchner's (1997) case studies of family literacy among Southeast Asian immigrants offer additional insights into family literacy programming. She recommends that notions about literacy "transfer" be expanded to include child to parent and sibling to sibling, as well as parent to child. Moreover, she cautions that family literacy program planners must look beyond participants' families to consider the effects of literacy on different types of communities.

In a study of the effects of an intergenerational literacy program on the English proficiency of nine bilingual families, Thornburg (1993) found that teachers' scaffolding and parents' and children's efforts to "linguistically mediate" each other's learning were integral to second language learning for both parents and children. The program was based on the assumptions that families often differ from schools in the types of literacy-related experiences they provide, that children's language learning develops as a result of both natural and cultural processes, and that the ways in which children are encouraged to think about language vary by social context. The goal of this program, then, was to

support language learning that was not context specific, i.e., that children could use successfully both at home and in school. Instruction centered on children's literature. Teachers read books aloud to both parents and children; during repeated readings, parents and children used felt boards and other activities to "act out" the stories. Children then completed a related art activity while their parents met with teachers to review the English-language vocabulary of the book and to generate at-home book experiences. Families received copies of the books for their own personal libraries.

Morrow and Young (1996) extended a school writing and reading program into the homes of first- through third-grade children in a minority, inner-city school. At-home activities included parents reading to children, storytelling, parent-child journal writing, creation of family word banks, and reading a children's magazine together. Children's learning gains, as measured by both standardized and informal writing and reading tests, showed the program to be effective.

Given the widely held view that family literacy activities must reflect the ethnic and cultural heritages of families (e.g., Morrow et al. 1995), one conclusion from these few studies of family literacy programs for persons of particular ethnic or cultural groups is that additional research is needed. In the meantime, however, the studies offer some guidance for program planners. For example, there is a clear need to know the linguistic and cultural backgrounds of participating families and to identify possible areas of tension between home and school communication and literacy interactions. Instructional routines based on learners' own goals for themselves and for their children as literacy learners seem to be effective. Instructional materials are authentic, and sessions feature a great deal of oral interaction with teachers providing scaffolds for parents, whether in the form of teaching English vocabulary, brainstorming discussion questions, or developing related activities. Parents receive materials for at-home use, and subsequent sessions focus on at-home literacy experiences.

Despite the threats to program quality and the complexity of curricular and instructional decisions surrounding family literacy, many programs achieve their goals. DeBruin-Parecki, Paris, and Seidenberg (1996) identified 10 assets enjoyed by successful programs. Some (e.g., secure funding source, good referral system, collaboration with related agencies) relate only indirectly to curriculum and instruction, but the majority are directly related and may serve as a framework for curricular and instructional decision making:

- Sensitivity to families, cultures, and communities
- Meaningful curriculum
- Focus on self-sufficiency through learning experiences
- Instruction that features interactivity and modeling
- Stable, well-trained staff with practical knowledge
- Age-appropriate activities
- Attention to barriers that prevent attendance (e.g., fear of school, child care, transportation)

## Collaboration

The very definition of family literacy programs invites collaboration, and as might be expected, authors of material in the ERIC database address collaboration from both conceptual and practical perspectives. Conceptually, collaboration is important because addressing the literacy needs of parents and children together is complex (Benjamin and Lord 1996). Moreover, collaboration allows integrated support services, which can widen the scope of curriculum and instruction, reduce duplication of effort, and allow multiple opportunities for learning to take place (Rasinski and Padak 1995).

From a practical perspective, collaborations that involve the exchange of services and materials are a promising way to enhance program offerings on a limited budget (Benjamin and Lord 1996). In their study of family literacy programs across the United States, Morrow et al. (1995) found collaboration especially evident at the local level, frequently manifested as centralized services for families. They note that these centralized services may be either a cause or an effect of collaboration:

> This emphasis on collaboration and partnerships has grown largely as a by-product of agencies with similar goals realizing the financial savings and potential for increased effectiveness associated with collaborative efforts. Collaboration and partnerships between different groups such as universities, public schools, early childhood education programs, adult literacy programs, and businesses have been advocated as one of the most promising avenues for continued growth of the family literacy movement. (pp. 6-7)

Collaboration can enhance multidisciplinary participatory learning. Learning is transmitted from teacher to students (either children or their parents), teachers can learn from students, and students can learn from each other (Quintero 1999). Collaborative partnerships between children's schools and family literacy programs allow integration of children's and parents' literacy learning curricula (Benjamin and Lord 1996).

Several researchers have explored the impact of collaboration on program success. For example, Anderson (1994) found student success to correlate partially with the number of agencies involved in the family literacy program. Roth et al. (1997) concluded that collaboration led to simplified access and assessment procedures, which, in turn, fostered participation in programs. "In a relatively short period of time, usually by the end of three months, participants came to view the [program] as a mediating institution, one that operated on the caring principles of a family" (p. 423).

In a study of family literacy programs housed in community colleges, Bauernfeind (1990) found that networking with preschool providers encouraged parents' participation. She concluded that communication among agencies was particularly critical. Likewise, Van Horn et al. (1992) noted that their project was strengthened by the partnership with higher education, the local literacy council, and the local public library. In fact, they assert that the project's greatest impact and most long-lasting contribution was the increased level of cooperation among the involved organizations. From a programmatic

perspective, developing positive relationships with related agencies, whether formal or informal, was related to the ease with which Even Start programs "settled into" communities (Rasinski and Padak 1994).

Knell and Giessler (1992) describe ways in which collaborative relationships at the state level and in individual communities can benefit family literacy programs. At the state level, they recommend establishment of interagency committees to be responsible for policy and programs. These committees could coordinate family literacy activities with all appropriate state agencies, recommend the consolidation of rules and regulations, oversee implementation of family literacy programs, and develop new legislation to increase funding of present programs. Local interagency committees could conduct needs assessments of resources and develop plans that include a comprehensive design of adult, child, and parent-child components; support services; plans for continued coordination; and evaluation. Both state and local committees could also promote family literacy through public awareness campaigns, forums on family literacy policies, and statewide surveys of family literacy programming.

Benjamin and Lord (1996) caution that collaborations can suffer if problems with communication, coordination, or structuring support services persist. They also offer a framework for establishing local interagency collaborations that can help to avoid these problems. An early step in the establishment of collaborative partnerships is for each participating agency to determine what it can offer others and what it can expect from others in return. This exploration should encompass consideration of boundaries, of where one agency's responsibilities stop and another's begins, and of whether the new collaboration will change these boundaries. These considerations should precede the next step in the process, which is for the new group to develop a common set of goals or a joint vision about what is to be accomplished. The goals statement should clearly articulate the mission of the collaborative group; all partners should endorse it (Rasinski and Padak 1994). Tice (2000) adds that collaborative groups should engage in ongoing joint training as projects evolve and notes that shared vision may develop over time as groups achieve their short-term goals.

Collaborations within programs also appear to enhance program effectiveness (Association for Community Based Education 1993; Roth et al. 1997). The sense of community that develops among participating families can increase participation in programs and enhance parents' comfort in interacting with school personnel. Roth et al. (1997) note that the women participating in their family literacy program appreciated the opportunity to draw comfort and guidance from their peers in the program.

Collaboration is important because of the conceptual complexity of family literacy programming; unfortunately, we know less about effective collaboration than any other aspect of family literacy (Anderson 1994; Roth et al. 1997). Nevertheless, programs persist in attempting to establish effective collaborations in order to provide comprehensive and fiscally efficient support for families. From a programmatic standpoint, collaboration can lead to integration of services and multidisciplinary curriculum efforts. Although establishing effective collaborative relationships requires some expertise and a commit-

ment from all involved, collaborations tend to persist even after programs conclude, so the effort may well be worth it.

The three issues addressed in this section—staff, curriculum and instruction, and collaboration—affect and are affected by each other. Policies and procedures related to these three critical aspects of family literacy programming influence outcomes for families, which are discussed in the next section.

# Outcomes

## Assessment Models

Since continued funding for family literacy and Even Start programs often depends on evidence of participants' progress, assessment is an important part of family literacy programs. A variety of standardized and alternative assessments are used to document participants' progress in family literacy programs (Association for Community Based Education 1993). The standardized assessments most often used for the adult participants in family literacy programs are the *Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE)*, *Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System* (CASAS), *Basic English Skills Test*, and the GED practice test (Miller 1999). Standardized tests used for children in a large-scale Even Start evaluation were the *Preschool Inventory* and the *Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test* (Morrow et al. 1995). No reports available in the ERIC database evaluate PACT (Parents and Children Together) time or describe measures to do so. Research is needed in this area.

Although standardized tests are most often required by funders and government agencies, alternative assessments such as portfolios, journals, checklists, observations, and interviews with parents can show progress in areas that standardized tests cannot (Anderson 1994; DeBruin-Parecki et al. 1997; Neuman 1995; Rasinski and Padak 1995). Some of the areas that alternative assessments measure are improved ability to solve personal dilemmas, changes in attitudes, development in setting goals, changes in parenting, growth in self-esteem and job-seeking activity (Association for Community Based Education 1993). Alternative assessments are especially useful with participants in English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL), who may have difficulty with standardized assessments (DeBruin-Parecki et al. 1997). Many believe that alternative assessment may measure the progress of all participants in family literacy programs more accurately than standardized tests (Knell and Geissler 1992). Alternative assessments can also help funders and other stakeholders see the "big picture" of family literacy (Elish-Piper 2000).

Any assessment of participants in family literacy programs must be connected and relevant to the participants' lives (Anderson et al. 1998). Part of this connection and relevance involves including participants in the evaluation process. One study, for example, found that participants had the following views about family literacy programs: family literacy cannot be superimposed; family literacy is not about changing people but about offering choices; programs should use the rich experiences of the participants; family literacy programs have direct and indirect benefits; and progress comes in small increments and takes time (Neuman, Caperelli, and Kee 1998).

Documenting the progress of participants in family literacy programs is also a way to determine the effectiveness of the programs. Formative, in-process evaluation results can be used to fine tune family literacy programs. Summative evaluation results, typically

obtained at the conclusion of a program, focus on overall effectiveness in achieving the program's goals. Both types of evaluations should be part of program planning. Instruments for program evaluation can be commercially available or locally developed and can include case studies of individuals and families, parent self-reports, anecdotal records, and ethnographic studies of family literacy patterns (Nickse 1990).

Formative program evaluation can show both changes in participants and changes in programs. Many programs evolve over time through a developmental continuum: the program may begin by offering only one component (such as adult education); next, the program expands to include parenting issues; then links are made to agencies that provide family services; parent/child activities are added to the program; the program narrows the target audience; and finally, the program incorporates more family support services (Knell and Geissler 1992).

In addition to documenting changes in participants and the evolution of programs, evaluations can show the strengths of family literacy programs, indicate areas that may need improvement, and provide other useful information about the program. Evaluations of family literacy programs reveal the following (Knell and Geissler 1992):

- Participants' personal and family goals vary widely.
- Programs work best when they clarify referral services and develop social networks among participants.
- Program results are enhanced when information from intake is used for program planning.
- Activities that are directly relevant to participants' lives work best.
- Perhaps most important, evaluation is most effective when it is participatory and integrated with program development.

Formative evaluation results are most useful when they are used either to identify particularly troublesome areas of program delivery or to provide direction for general program refinement. In either case, once data from the program have been collected, a six-step model can be used to analyze the data and plan any needed improvements: (1) convene a planning team of five to eight people who represent various aspects of program delivery; (2) develop a shared understanding of what the results mean; (3) explore the reasons for the problems identified in the results; (4) generate and evaluate possible solutions; (5) select a solution that has a good possibility for correcting the problem; (6) evaluate the success of the plan (Padak and Rasinski 1994).

For the most part, evaluation of family literacy programs is still in its infancy. Many programs have only minimal evaluation methods in place, which could be due to lack of staff and/or funding. Some programs complete evaluations only if required by funders (Nickse 1990). The lack of in-depth evaluation data about family literacy programs makes evaluation one of the most pressing concerns facing policy makers and practitioners. Yet ongoing assessment of participants and evaluation of programs is necessary for the future of family literacy and should receive adequate funding (Morrow et al. 1995). Research on family literacy programs suggests that in addition to documenting the

effectiveness of the programs themselves, evaluations should compare family literacy with traditional adult education and consider a wide range of topics such as retention, collaboration, parenting, recruitment, ESOL family literacy programs, and transfer of literacy skills from parents to children (National Center for Family Literacy 1995).

Program evaluations and participant assessments of all kinds are important parts of family literacy programs. Programs can use assessments or evaluation results to inform instruction, show the progress of the participants, and highlight the strengths of the program.

## Assessment Outcomes

Outcomes of family literacy programs are related to goals and objectives and assessment, which, in turn, vary according to funding sources, collaborating agencies, and local population needs. Notwithstanding the variety of influences on results and the present shortcomings of assessment models, family literacy programming demonstrates outcomes that benefit adults, children, families, schools and communities. Family literacy programs provide the means for addressing problems of family life, positive relationships, and involvement in the schools (Anderson 1994). Authors of material in the ERIC database document the greater achievement of participants in family literacy programs compared with single focus programs, whether adult or child, and with nonparticipants in literacy programs. Readers who have questions about the nature of the research reviewed in this section can consult Appendix 1 for a chart of the dates, purposes, scopes, and designs of the studies reviewed.

Adults who participated in family literacy programs enhanced their academic skills. Reading, writing, and math proficiency increased (Iglitzen and Wandschneider 1993-94; Rodriguez-Brown et al. 1999), and oral communication ability improved (Association for Community Based Education 1993). Parents earned their GEDs (Benjamin and Lord 1996; Morrow et al. 1995; National Center for Family Literacy 1994; Roe 1999) and advanced their educational levels (Anderson 1994; Iglitzen and Wandschneider 1993-94). In one study, adults with the lowest levels of literacy displayed the highest literacy growth (Paratore 1992). However, in another study (Tao, Gamse, and Tarr 1998), participants whose reading and math levels were below seventh grade at admission to the programs gained less over 1 year than those who ability levels were at or above 10th grade. The latter group gained 1.5–2 years, as measured by the TABE. The same study revealed greater gains for second- and third-year Even Start participants.

Adults' literacy skills improved from interaction with their children. Thornburg (1993) found that parents who did not feel that they had sufficient English-speaking ability to read to their children at the beginning of a 6-month program increased their English-language proficiency scores on standardized tests in a family literacy program that focused on reading storybooks. When parents had more experience with books, they selected new reading materials for themselves and shared reading strategies they had learned with their children (Handel 1999). Another indirect benefit from family literacy programs is the newly acquired comfort that adults felt in a school setting (Anderson 1994).

## Outcomes

Research reveals that adults in family literacy programs experience personal growth and social development as well as academic gains. Adults view the program as a second chance to get an education (Handel 1999). They exhibit more confidence and more awareness of social practices (Association for Community Based Education 1993; Neuman et al. 1998). Increased self-esteem enables adults to engage in self-advocacy and risk-taking, which are necessary to learning (Roth et al. 1997). "Once these initially wary adults learned that, in this caring environment, making mistakes was not a punishable offense, they were willing to risk trying out some of the strategies recommended by program staff and guest speakers" (p. 425).

In addition to enhancing academic and social skills, adults in family literacy programs increased their job skills and employment possibilities. A 1994-97 Even Start evaluation (Tao, Gamse, and Tarr 1998) reported that more vocational training was integrated into curricula. Iglitzen and Wandschneider (1993-94) reported that one-third of the participants in a program they studied found employment. Present employment figures may be higher, but literature available in the ERIC database does not yet reflect the effect of the employment emphasis in the welfare legislation of 1998.

Whether employment is the primary motivation for attendance in family literacy programs or not requires further research. A large, national telephone survey (Tadros 1995) revealed that adults engaged in educational programs primarily for job skills and employment, whereas an end-of-the-year questionnaire (Neuman et al. 1998) indicated that parents took part because they wanted to improve themselves. However, it is possible in the latter study that adults focused on more personal goals after participating in the program for a period of time.

Retention is an important issue in family literacy since the longer families stay, the greater the gains. Adults who remain in classes for at least 150 hours show an average increase of 1.5 years in reading level (National Center for Family Literacy 1994). Higher educational levels of adults attending family literacy programs are associated with greater completion rates (Tadros 1995). A 1994-97 evaluation of Even Start (Tao et al. 1998) described those likely to complete their programs successfully:

- Native English speakers are three times more likely to complete than are those with limited English proficiency.
- Continuing participants are more likely to complete than new enrollees.
- Those with educational achievement below sixth grade or with high school education or more are more likely to complete than those in middle achievement levels.
- New families with extensive support services were more likely to complete than those with little or no support. The very neediest families were least likely to complete the program.

Attendance has also been correlated with growth in functional literacy (National Center for Family Literacy 1994).

Why do adults participate, and more important, why do they stay? Many authors have addressed the issue of retention. The results of research are inconsistent. Paratore (1992) found regular attendance across cycles of instruction was greater in family literacy programs than in adult basic education classes. In contrast, Rodriguez-Brown et al. (1999) found attendance in the program they studied to be erratic. At issue is whether day-to-day attendance can be equated with retention rates. Parents may participate over an extended period of time despite missing individual classes due to family responsibilities. Further study is needed to determine short-term and long-term attendance patterns.

Retention in family literacy programs exceeds that of single-focus programs. Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS) scores for family literacy participants are double those attending adult programs (National Center for Family Literacy 1994). Adults in family literacy drop out less often; 71% of participants remained at the end of a year compared with 55% in adult basic education programs (National Center for Family Literacy 1994). In a large-scale, national survey of Even Start, retention increases were reported from 35% to 90% in adult literacy and from 8% to 90% in parent education (Morrow et al. 1995).

Several studies have investigated the reasons that adults remain in family literacy programs. In a study of 52 projects supported by the Barbara Bush Foundation for Family Literacy, Neuman et al. (1998) found that retention was linked to fulfilling participants' needs. More specifically, participants felt that their needs were best met in programs that provided parent involvement in planning, family-based activities, ongoing assessment to foster a sense of success, creation of social networks, and the integration of services. Additional factors that contributed to high retention were the use of authentic materials (Paratore 1992), a participatory teaching approach (Handel 1999), a meaningful setting for learning (Paratore 1992), and the enthusiasm of the teacher (Handel 1999). Children's desire to attend may motivate parents to participate regularly (Anderson 1994).

Children as well as adults benefit from participating in family literacy programs. More children enroll in early childhood education, which gives them an earlier exposure to literacy and developmental activities. An Even Start evaluation (Morrow et al. 1995) documents an attendance increase in early childhood programs from 8% to 93%. Another Even Start evaluation (Tao, Gamse, and Tarr 1998) documented significant gains for children in school readiness as measured by the Preschool Inventory and in language development as measured by the Preschool Language Scale. Children progressed similarly regardless of family need.

Studies of family literacy programs reveal the influence of parents on their children's reading development and success in school (Anderson 1994). Nickse (Anderson 1994) refers to the "synergy" that is present when parents and children interact in family literacy programs. "When parents demonstrated dedication to completing their own education, they became positive role models to their children for doing academic work, and more generally, for persisting in the face of difficulties" (p. 424). Purcell-Gates (1994)

found that more sophisticated linguistic knowledge among children was linked to parents' literacy levels, parents reading to children, and parents reading for their own enjoyment.

This synergy may account for the children in family literacy programs learning more than children in child-focused programs (National Center for Family Literacy 1994), as measured by children's end-of-the-year scores on the Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test (PPVT), which rose from the 11th to the 19th percentile. Another study (Morrow et al. 1995) found no differences between Even Start children and control groups on the PPVT but significant improvements favoring Even Start children on the Preschool Inventory. Children in South Carolina family literacy programs scored higher than the overall first-grade population in their districts on the standardized Cognitive Skills Assessment Battery (Purcell-Gates 1994). In a comparison between a school-based and a home-and-school-based literacy program (Morrow and Young 1996), children in the latter group showed greater literacy achievement.

In addition to greater achievement on tests, children indicated increased interest in literacy activities. Children demonstrated greater interest in reading and writing (Griswold and Ullman 1997; Morrow and Young 1996) and an increased understanding of speech (Iglitzin and Wandschneider 1993-94). Smith and Simic (1993) found that 48% of the middle-school children in their study professed a greater interest in reading and 42% expressed a desire to read alone.

Family literacy programming contributed to language development and expanded concepts of print for children. Parents had more print in their homes (Neuman 1996). Even more important than having books in the home is the interactive talk and activity that surrounds them. Parents who were enrolled in family literacy programs interacted with their children around print twice as often as parents in adult education programs and three times as often as parents not in any literacy program. This parent-child book interplay was significantly correlated to print knowledge such as concepts of print and the alphabetic principle (Purcell-Gates 1994). Moreover, children from families where English was not the first language improved their English proficiency skills (Thornburg 1993).

Academically, children performed better than expected when they entered school (Benjamin and Lord 1996). Parents' and teachers' expectations of children in family literacy programs may account, in part, for their greater success in school (Anderson 1994).

A longitudinal study (Anderson 1994) revealed that children continue to benefit throughout their educational lives: 94% who attended family literacy programs either completed high school, received a GED, or were still in school; 43% of the graduates were attending college; and 57% of dropouts received a GED.

In addition to language and learning skills, children increased their developmental skills (Anderson 1994) and exhibited greater use of large and small muscles (Iglitzen and Wandschneider 1993-94). They enhanced their social skills in areas of self-esteem, self-

help (Iglitzen and Wandschneider 1993-94), independence, and friendships (Griswold and Ullman 1997). Long-term social benefits were found in a longitudinal study of High/Scope preschoolers (Anderson 1994). Participating children grew up to have fewer criminal arrests, higher earnings, more accumulated wealth, and stronger marriages than control groups.

Although research tends to look at outcomes for parents and children separately, many authors of material in the ERIC database emphasize family outcomes, particularly in improved home literacy environments (Anderson 1994). Findings that print mediates the lives of low-literacy families eight times less frequently than high-literacy families (Purcell-Gates et al. 1995) illustrate the need for literacy activities in the home.

Family literacy programs capitalize on parents' desire to read to their children. Given the opportunity to practice storybook reading in a parent-child context (Paratore 1992), parents learn to support family literacy development (Griswold and Ullman 1997). They acquire and use literacy strategies (Rodriguez-Brown et al. 1999) and establish more literacy routines in the home (Paratore 1992). Parents read to their children more frequently (Benjamin and Lord 1996; Iglitzen and Wandschneider 1993-94) and provide more books and literacy materials in their homes (Benjamin and Lord 1996; Tice 2000), although writing activities were infrequent (Paratore 1992). Older children read to younger siblings (Griswold and Ullman 1997).

In a family reading program for Spanish-speaking parents (Thornburg 1993), parents became more interactive in reading to their children over a 6-month period as the English fluency of the children increased. In a reading program for middle-school students and their parents (Smith and Simic 1993), two-thirds of the children thought that the program improved communication with their parents, and 54% wanted to read and talk with parents about books. Handel (1999) quotes parents who value parent-child reading: "We read together as a family." "We have more to talk about and enjoy."

In a study to determine how the genre of a book influences parent-child interactions, Newman (1996) concluded that highly predictable books produced more "chiming" and feedback from children compared with narrative texts, which required more scaffolding and recall from the parents. She stresses, however, that the frequency of conversations about books had the greatest impact on the child's language development and knowledge of print conventions. Anderson (1994) also documents gains in parents' ability to label objects orally and to focus their children's attention through scaffolding.

Many family literacy programs provide opportunities to discuss and practice parenting skills. With parenting activities that focus parents' attention on children (Association for Community Based Education 1993), children receive the developmental support they need (Anderson 1994). Parents recognized the importance of play in learning (Benjamin and Lord 1996; Iglitzen and Wandschneider 1993-94). Participation in Even Start is related to moderate gains in parents' ability to provide emotional support and cognitive stimulation for their children (Tao, Gamse, and Tarr 1998) Families used libraries more

frequently (Benjamin and Lord 1996; Handel 1999), although Paratore (1992) found that families visited the library no more than once a month.

Authors of material in the ERIC database also document closer family relationships in which parents and children work together more effectively (Anderson 1994; Association for Community Based Education 1993; Benjamin and Lord 1996; Handel 1999; Morrow and Young 1996; Smith and Simic 1992; Tice 2000). Family literacy activities contribute to "reshaped relationships between mothers and children" (Griswold and Ullman 1997).

Parent participation in family literacy programs leads to a greater respect for education (Anderson 1994), which, in turn, leads to a better understanding of the parents' role in a child's education (Rodriguez-Brown et al. 1999). Parents support their children's education by finding new ways to help children with school (Morrow and Young 1996) and by participating in school activities (Anderson 1994).

Therefore, schools are among the first community groups to benefit from family literacy programs. Since family literacy programs contribute to improved readiness for kindergarten and better school retention rates, schools will need fewer remedial classes and dropout prevention programs (Anderson 1994). As a result of working together, teachers, parents, and children have more positive attitudes toward literacy programs (Morrow and Young 1996). Thornburg (1993) discovered that teachers changed their classroom styles of inquiry from higher-order abstractions to more affective interactions in response to interactions with parents.

Neuman (1996) describes a series of workshops to assist teachers in understanding and disseminating important information and policy from the point of view of parents. The workshops covered such critical issues as new types of assessment, appropriate ways to help with homework, health and nutritional needs of children, and violence prevention. More funding is required to support home-school partnerships, especially those that explore how teachers can interact with parents and the community (Smith and Simic 1993).

Although it is generally accepted that the community at large benefits from family literacy programs, only two longitudinal studies appear in the ERIC documents selected for this monograph, perhaps due to the relatively recent designation of family literacy as a separate field. One study documents long-term educational completion of children in Texas who attended family literacy programs, and the other, the social advantages achieved by adults who had attended High Scope preschool in Michigan (Anderson 1994).

Anderson (1994) also discusses the potential benefits of family literacy programs for the community. Business would gain a larger pool of qualified workers. Given the strong correlation between economic status and literacy, family literacy programs could help reduce the effects of poverty on self-esteem, hope, and aspirations, if not on poverty itself. With increased educational levels and strengthened families, crime and violence could

decrease. Because parents would have a better chance to become self-sufficient, government would spend less on welfare services. Research is needed that takes into account the welfare reform legislation of 1998.

Family literacy programs are successful for both parents and children. Described as a "family" gathering, not as a class (Roth et al. 1997), programs incorporate services and content (Neuman et al. 1998), advocate a participatory approach to learning (Elish-Piper 1996-97; Griswold and Ullman 1997; Morrow and Young 1996), and integrate literacy and social needs (Puchner 1993). However, there continues to be a need for recognizing and disseminating best practices (DeBruin-Parecki et al. 1996; Knell and Geissler 1992; Yaffe and Williams 1998), understanding the cultural and family contexts in which learning takes place (Morrow and Young 1996; Neuman 1996; Smith and Simic 1992), and discovering ways to attract and retain low-literacy families (Smith and Simic 1992). There is also a need to design and evaluate programs for teen parents, who do not remain in the programs very long; for the neediest families, who participate intensively for a limited time; and for parents who do not speak English as their first language, who remain active in programs longer than others (Tao, Gamse, and Tarr 1998).

Based on a study of state-funded family literacy programs and their collaborating agencies, Illinois established a model for developing and supporting family literacy (Knell and Geissler 1992). The model includes the coordination and consolidation of regulations; a proposal for new legislation to increase funding; the development of implementation plans that incorporate, among other items, comprehensive programming with parent, child, and parent-child components; and an evaluation process.

The existence of only two evaluation studies of special populations highlights the need for more information on how family literacy can meet the needs of these families. One detailed study documented the literacy outcomes of a program for families of deaf parents and hearing children (Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf 1992). The program evaluated the children's speech and hearing progress, disseminated parenting materials, and conducted classes in sign language for children. A report of a Native American Even Start program (Tao, Khan, and Arriola 1998) suggests a comparison with traditional Even Start programs. The program is similar in most data-gathering categories but exceptional in its higher retention rates, employment rates, and educational degrees attained. To date, no studies of migrant family literacy programs have been included in the ERIC database.

Outcomes have yet to be documented for some critical aspects of family literacy programming. Moreover, additional research into most reported effects is warranted. Nevertheless, existing evidence strongly suggests that participation in family literacy programs positively affects both adults and children, both academically and personally.

## Outcomes

Family literacy programs are built on the premise that the home is a crucial learning environment for children, and our findings strongly affirm that these programs are achieving what they set out to achieve—literacy learning at the family level, thus increasing the children's chances for success in school. (Purcell-Gates 1994, p. 74)

# The Future

To summarize this monograph, we first offer a description of a prototypical successful family literacy program. Next we attempt to synthesize some of the many calls for additional research that appeared in material available in the ERIC database. We conclude with quotations from three parents involved in family literacy programs.

## A Prototypical Program

A successful family literacy program is carefully planned. This planning always involves both external and internal constituents. Members of the community, including those representing schools and social service agencies, collaborate with family literacy program planners. Parents also participate in program planning, as do the teachers who will be responsible for the day-to-day operation of the program. The goal for planning is to develop an educational program that reflects the cultural backgrounds and social and economic needs of participating families.

The program is based on a strengths model. Teachers understand the families in the program and see them as collaborators in program delivery. Curriculum is functional and integrated; authentic issues are used as the basis for literacy learning activities, which themselves feature integration of the language arts. Instruction is purposeful; social interaction is prominent. Parents are involved as partners in all aspects of program planning, delivery, and evaluation. Although day-to-day attendance is sometimes erratic because of other issues in adults' lives, they remain active in the program because it meets their educational, personal, and social needs.

Formative assessment is frequent and ongoing; assessment results are used to refine program practices. Professional development for program staff is also frequent and ongoing. The program has stable, long-term funding.

## Necessary Research

The preceding synthesis that describes a prototypical successful family literacy program demonstrates that much is known about program effectiveness, but much remains to be discovered and documented. Moreover, inspection of the purposes of the studies summarized in Appendix 1 points to additional needed research. Nearly half of the research studies we reviewed focused on programs, for example, and a fair number of these were descriptive in nature. These descriptions are important, to be sure, but inquiry into the effectiveness of certain types of programs, particularly curriculum and instructional practices, appears to be warranted. With regard to participants in family literacy programs, the eight studies we reviewed primarily address reasons for participation. This, too, is an important issue, but inquiries focused on other aspects of participants may yield important insights.

Many authors of material in the ERIC database also cite the need for additional family literacy research. Some of these calls for research are general in nature. For example, DeBruin-Parecki et al. (1997) note, "The field of family literacy is changing rapidly. It needs theory, research … and knowledge to guide services and practices" (p. 604). Both Anderson (1994) and the National Center for Family Literacy (1995) echo these sentiments.

Similarly, Purcell-Gates (1993) asserts that a great deal of additional research into all aspects of family literacy programming is needed. She urges researchers to look for valid and reliable data about both programs themselves and the impact of family literacy education on other facets of people's lives, such as the relationship between home literacy and school literacy and the relationship between changes in family literacy and poverty. With regard to the former, she cautions that the "inference" of home literacy activities affecting children's school performance is based on correlational data. With regard to the latter, she stresses the need to "unbundle" issues related to literacy and poverty. She cautions that the equation of poverty with low literacy is not proven, that the exact relationship is not known. Consequently, researchers should "describe better the separate and interdependent ways in which poverty, low literacy, and children's 'readiness' to learn in school interact" (p. 671). She sees ongoing ethnographic research as a promising way to address all these issues.

Research should focus on aspects of curriculum and instruction as well. In addition to calling for general study of "best practices," Paratore (1992) cites the necessity of a research focus on parent-child interactions, both in family literacy programs and at home. Quintero's (1999) work with people representing different ethnic and cultural groups suggests that this research may need to focus on redefinitions of "developmentally appropriate practice" to reflect cultural differences among families. Likewise, Smith and Simic (1992) argue that the field needs research-based designs or models for promoting home-school relationships. They note,

> Without information about likely results of particular approaches, educators designing new programs or policies for improving and increasing parent involvement are at a real disadvantage. They need to know which strategies actually lead to improved achievement, attitudes, or habits, and which approaches best encourage parents to effect change in their children's academic lives. Without clear linkages between practice and outcomes, educators, policy leaders, and parents cannot make informed choices. (p. 1)

All of this research needs to be conducted longitudinally as well as on short-term bases. Longitudinal research will allow scholars to understand issues related to transfer of new learning into families' homes (Anderson et al. 1998). Moreover, program impact, including effects on communities, can be best addressed through longitudinal research (Anderson 1994; Association for Community Based Education 1993; Knell and Geissler 1992). It may be that some of this long-term study is currently underway and that the next synthesis of research will address these results.

## Voices of the Parents

Instead of concluding with voices of scholars, we conclude with three quotations from parent participants in family literacy programs. Together these parents echo many of the points raised throughout the monograph: the importance of shared experiences and development of "community," curriculum and instruction that make a positive difference, the development of confidence in parenting, and, perhaps most important, programmatic influences on family literacy activities in the home. The first quotation recounts one mother's evaluation of her family literacy program. The next two show the influence of family literacy program attendance on parent-child interactions, the first from the mother of preschool children and the second from a middle school child's parent.

> Everyone seems to really come alive during the Family Reading session. There's a lot of participation. We … talk about the issues generated by the reading … and we share experiences. It's a good way to get to know the other parents and it gives us a lot of material to talk about when working with our children. (Handel 1999, pp. 139-140)

> This program helps me to remember to work with my kids when things get so busy or not so good at home and I would forget. I'm learning new ideas I wouldn't have thought of before. You make me more confident that I am a good mom who does good things with my children. (Morrow and Young 1996, p. 13)

> I didn't realize the enjoyment my daughter and I had missed before this program. We laughed and cried at the books we read. We shared our thoughts and feelings on lots of "touchy" issues. I'm very grateful for this program. We will continue to read together! (Smith and Simic 1992, p. 18)

# Appendix 1
# Research Matrix

| Author(s) | Date | Purpose | Scope | Design |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Anderson | 1994 | To describe family literacy programs | Family literacy programs in Colorado (3-year period) | Surveys, case studies (3); analysis not specified |
| Association for Community Based Education | 1993 | To identify effective strategies, structures, and approaches | 14 community-based family literacy programs | Observation, document analysis, interviews (adult participants, teachers, program administrators); case studies (no analysis details provided) |
| DeBruin-Parecki, Paris, & Scalenberg | 1998 | To identify popular models and practices in Michigan's family literacy programs | 50 family literacy programs (11 of these for more in-depth study) | Phone and mail surveys, interviews, observation; analysis not specified |
| Elish-Piper | 1996-97 | To describe participants' literacy uses and program response | 13 families from 1 program | Interviews, dialogue journals, observations, documents; constant-comparative method |
| Elish-Piper | 2000 | To examine the extent to which the adult education component of urban family literacy programs incorporates family strengths, needs, and goals | 67 urban family literacy programs in the Midwest | Survey, interview; frequencies, qualitative thematic analysis |
| Handel | 1998 | To describe a field-based professional development project | 90 K-3 teachers, 1987-1995 | Field notes, surveys, interviews, videotapes; content analysis and constant-comparative method |
| Handel | 1999 | To investigate the meaning of involvement in a family literacy | 7 women from 1 program | Interviews, observations, surveys; inductive analysis using grounded theory |
| Ighizzu & Wandschneider | 1993-94 | To evaluate Even Start programs in the state of Washington | 134 families from 15 programs | Standardized assessments, surveys, interviews; pre-post analysis |
| Linder & Elish-Piper | 1995 | To explore how parents in a family literacy program used dialogic journals | 16 parents from 1 program | Dialogic journals, interviews, observations; constant-comparative method |

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## Appendix 1

| Author(s) | Date | Purpose | Scope | Design |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Morrow & Young | 1996, 1997 | To determine effects of a family literacy program on children, parents, and teachers | 28 families (focal children in grades 1-3) in experimental group | Informal and standardized assessments pre and post, interviews, analysis of covariance, frequencies of response to interview questions |
| National Center for Family Literacy | 1994 | To describe impact of family literacy participation on adults and children | 500 families from 32 family literacy programs | Standardized assessments, participation data, informal assessments, surveys, statistical analyses |
| Neuman | 1995 | To develop and evaluate a family literacy book club | 1 program | Journals, checklists, standardized assessments, audiotapes of sessions; interactional analysis, pre-post assessments |
| Neuman | 1996 | To examine an intervention strategy designed to provide access to literacy materials and opportunities for parent-child reading | Parents and children from 6 Head Start programs in 3 schools | Standardized assessments, informal assessments, observations; statistical analysis (experimental control) |
| Neuman, Caperelli, & Kee | 1998 | To understand how participant families described their involvement in family literacy programs | Current students, dropouts, and program graduates (n = 53) | Interviews; analysis not specified |
| Nurss & Smith | 1993 | To investigate low attendance and retention problems in 1 family literacy program | 93 K-3 teachers, 1987-1995 | Field notes, surveys, interviews, videotapes; content analysis and constant-comparative method |
| Paratore | 1992 | To examine the influence of family literacy participation on parents' literacy | 367 adults from 1 project (article focuses on 15); data gathered | Informal assessments, documents, surveys, pre-post analysis, descriptive statistics |
| Purcell-Gates | 1994 | To examine the relationships among children's learning about print, parents' literacy levels, and uses of print in the home | 24 children from 20 families | Observation, informal assessments, inductive analysis, correlations |
| Purcell-Gates, L'Allier, & Smith | 1995 | To describe uses of print at home | 4 families (part of a larger study) | Observation, document analysis; determined frequency and type according to framework proposed by Teale |

## Appendix 1

| Author(s) | Date | Purpose | Scope | Design |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Quintero | 1999 | To investigate participatory settings involving children, parents, teachers, and family literacy groups operating in connection with Head Start | 2 bilingual family literacy programs over 3 years | Videotapes, field notes, interviews; qualitative analysis framed by critical theory, social constructivist theory, and social theory |
| Rasinski & Padak | 1993 | To identify issues related to initiating Even Start programs | 8 programs | Survey; thematic analysis, frequencies |
| Rasinski & Padak | 1994 | To identify "critical moments" in the establishment of Even Start programs | 8 programs | Survey; thematic analysis, frequencies |
| Rasinski & Padak | 1995 | To describe attempts to develop integrated curricula in Even Start programs | 8 programs | Survey; analysis not specified |
| Rodriguez-Brown, F.; & Albom | 1999 | To explore effects of a family literacy program for new Hispanic immigrants over 2-year period | Mothers from 60 families who participated in project | Interviews, questionnaires; frequencies, percentages, bivariate correlational analyses |
| Roe | 1999 | To determine whether "traditional" GED programs or family literacy programs produce better results | All students who entered 2 programs over a 4.5-month period | Classroom records, test results, informal questioning |
| Roth, Myers-Jennings, & Stowell | 1997 | To describe participant perspectives | 11 participants from 1 program | Interviews; constant-comparative method |
| Smith & Stine | 1992 | To describe and evaluate year 2 of the Parents Sharing Books program | Volunteers from 28 sites | Surveys (parents and students), interviews, pre-post analysis (analysis procedures for interview data not specified) |
| Smith & Stine | 1993 | To evaluate Parents Sharing Books, a 2.5-year family literacy program for middle school students | Parents, students, and program leaders from 100 programs (71% of total) | Questionnaires (program leaders), surveys (parents and students), case study interviews; pre-post comparisons (other analyses not specified) |

## Appendix 1

| Author(s) | Date | Purpose | Scope | Design |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| Tadros | 1995 | To determine factors related to parent participation in adult education programs | 815 families from 1991 National Household Education Survey | Telephonic survey of 60,000 adults; t-tests, correlations, multiple regression analyses |
| Lee, Grunse, & Tarr | 1998 | To describe Even Start program implementation, 1994-1997 | 60 Even Start programs | Required national evaluation instruments; descriptive statistics |
| Lee, Kling, & Arriola | 1998 | To describe model Even Start programs | 8 programs | Surveys; descriptive and inferential statistics (national evaluation data) |
| Hornburg | 1993 | To examine effects of family literacy program on measured English proficiency | 9 families in 1 program | Observations, interviews, standard assessments; pre-post analysis, correlations, descriptive analysis of findings |
| Tice | 2000 | To explore the development and impact of collaborative relationships in a family literacy program | 27 participants from 1 program | Interviews, documents, surveys, observation; qualitative thematic analysis |
| Van Horn, Ovsiew, & Askov | 1992 | To evaluate a model of community-based family literacy | 1 program | Surveys, interviews, informal assessments, analysis not specified |
| Western Pennsylvania School for the Deaf | 1992 | To describe the literacy needs of families with deaf parents and hearing children; to evaluate family literacy programs designed to meet the identified needs | 11 families | Surveys, analysis not specified |
| Yaffe & Williams | 1998 | To explore reasons for participation in family literacy programs | 6 women from 1 program | Interviews (participants and staff); grounded theory analysis |

# Appendix 2
# Family Literacy Websites

(all sites active as of April 2002)

**Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998**
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/AdultEd/InfoBoard/legis.html
Sponsoring Agency: Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE), U.S. Department of Education

The information on this page explains the many aspects of the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act of 1998. Some of the aspects highlighted on this site include final unified plan guidance, policy memoranda, resources available for Title I of the Workforce Investment Act, performance accountability, requests for public comments on the act.

**Americans Encouraged to Go Back to School and Get Involved**
http://senate.gov/~dpc/families_first/bts3.html
Sponsoring Agency: U.S. Senate, Democratic Leadership

The information on this site explains why parents and others should become more involved in their children's education. A list of issues parents should address regarding their schools, children, and legislature is provided.

**California Family Impact Seminar (CAFIS)**
http://www.library.ca.gov/CAFIS/about.cfm
Sponsoring Agency: California State Library

CAFIS is a nonpartisan policy research and education project that seeks to provide accurate current information on family issues at state and local levels. They achieve these goals by giving state policymakers up-to-date information, providing forums for open discussion of current family issues, facilitating communication among state officials, and generating a family-centered approach to all information.

**Early Childhood Family Education (ECFE) and Welfare Reform: How a Universal Access (Non-Targeted) Program Can Assist Families Affected by Welfare Reform**
http://www.cyfc.umn.edu/Learn/ecfe3.html
Sponsoring Agency: Minnesota Department of Children, Families and Learning

ECFE is a voluntary public school program for all Minnesota families with children between the ages of birth through Kindergarten. The program elements are described on the site.

## Appendix 2

**ERIC Clearinghouse on Adult, Career, and Vocational Education (ERIC/ACVE)**
http://ericacve.org/
Sponsoring Agency: Office of Educational Research and Improvement, U.S. Department of Education

This site allows the user to link to the various services ERIC/ACVE offers, including full text of publications and simple and advanced searches of the entire ERIC database.

**Family Literacy Discussion List**
http://www.nifl.gov/lincs/discussions/nifl-family/family_literacy.html
Sponsoring Agency: National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)

This site allows the user to read current posted messages (or messages from years past) about family literacy.

**Family Literacy Resource Notebook**
http://literacy.kent.edu/Oasis/famlitnotebook/
Sponsoring Agency: Ohio Literacy Resource Center

From this site, you are able to download a free copy of the *Family Literacy Resource Notebook* (FLRN). You must have Adobe Acrobat installed on your computer to view and print the FLRN. The FLRN serves a broad spectrum of users—from someone who wants to know what family literacy is all about to a family literacy provider who wants to expand or enrich an existing program.

**Family Literacy—Respecting Family Ways**
http://www.kidsource.com/kidsource/content5/family.literacy.html
Sponsoring Agency: Kid Source Online

An ERIC/ACVE Digest on family literacy is available on this site. It addresses the following: a contextual connection, variations in family literacy programs, the value of different literacy, power considerations in literacy outcomes, and the community connection to family literacy. Also available are links to other publications such as Children's Literacy Development and Helping Your Child Learn to Read.

**Family Literacy Special Collection**
http://literacy.kent.edu/Midwest/FamilyLit/
Sponsoring Agency: National Institute for Literacy (NIFL)

The Family Literacy Special Collection page provides access to a variety of resources electronically. At this site you can explore parenting issues, children's activities, and classroom materials. You will also discover professional development topics and current event information. It is also possible to browse the site for developing curriculum or to download classroom activities.

**Guidance for Implementing the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act: Questions and Answers**
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OVAE/AdultEd/qa.html
Sponsoring Agency: Office of Vocational and Adult Education (OVAE)

The question/answer format of this site allows the reader to easily access information. Questions are divided into many different categories, including state responsibility, reporting requirements and data collection, performance reporting, financial reporting, contents of state plan, state certifications and assurances, developing and submitting state plan, state plan approval, unified plan, state leadership activities, financial and other considerations, cost (sharing) requirements, and maintenance of effort.

**National Center for Family Literacy**
http://www.famlit.org/
Sponsoring Agency: National Center for Family Literacy

This site contains general information about NCFL, as well as the Family Literacy Alliance, training opportunities, publications, Head Start Family Literacy Project, Kentucky Institute for Family Literacy, school- and work-focused initiatives, policy and advocacy, research, Momentum (NCFL newsletter), and ways to support the organization. Also available is a list of current events at the NCFL.

**National Evaluation of the Even Start Family Literacy Program, 1994-1997 Final Report**
http://www.ed.gov/pubs/evenstart_final/evenstart.pdf
Sponsoring Agency: U.S. Department of Education
The Even Start Family Literacy Final Report from 1998 is the final product of the second national Even Start Evaluation. This final report describes the Even Start program in general and displays all 287 pages of the evaluation.

**National Parent Information Network (NPIN)**
http://www.npin.org
Sponsoring Agencies: National Library of Education (NLE), Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI), U.S. Department of Education

NPIN aims to provide access to research-based information about parenting and family involvement in schools. The NPIN homepage links to the following topics: about NPIN, what's new, virtual library, questions, parent news, special initiatives, and search.

**No Child Left Behind Act of 2001: Reauthorization of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act**
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea
Sponsoring Agency: United States Department of Education

This is the homepage for the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001. A brief description of the act is available on this site, and its implications for states are explained. Flexibility Plans, Booklets, and the President's Plan for education reform are additional aspects of this site.

**No Child Left Behind: Executive Summary**
http://www.ed.gov/offices/OESE/esea/exec-summ.html
Sponsoring Agency: United States Department of Education

The information on this site explains how the federal government's role in education will be reformed so that no child is left behind. A blueprint or action plan to improve education consists of seven performance-based titles. The reform agenda is comprised of the following key components that are explained in further detail on this site: increased accountability for states, school districts, and schools; greater choice for parents and students, particularly those attending low-performing schools; more flexibility for states and local educational agencies (LEAs) in the use of federal education dollars; and a stronger emphasis on reading, especially for our youngest children.

**Policy and Advocacy: Literacy Involves Families Together (LIFT) Act**
http://www.famlit.org/policy/lift.html
Sponsoring Agency: National Center for Family Literacy (NCFL)

This site provides the written version of the LIFT Act. Links are available from this page to other NCFL resources.

**Research Center for Families & Children Spring Newsletter: Families and Children**
http://www.uky.edu/HES/rcfc/vol7no1/vol7no1.html
Sponsoring Agency: Research Center for Families & Children, University of Kentucky

This site includes the 1998 spring issue of the Research Center for Families and Children Newsletter. The article titled, "The Changing Complexion of Family Literacy Programs," by Jacqueline E. Korengel, argues for the redefinition of family literacy services and provides an alternative classification for family literacy programs.

**Welfare Initiatives**
http://www.famlit.org/welfare/wreform.html
Sponsoring Agency: National Center for Family Literacy

Listed on this site are various publications available to read online. Since the sponsor of this site is the NCFL, much of what is available on this site is also available on the NCFL homepage; however, this section focuses on the connection between family literacy and welfare reform.

**Welfare Reform Policy, Practice, Information**
http://www.brown.edu/Departments/Swearer_Center/Literacy_Resources/welfare.html
Sponsoring Agency: Literacy Resources/Rhode Island (LR/RI)

LR/RI's links page and women and literacy pages contain links to resources and statistics related to welfare, welfare reform, legislation and related information. This page also contains links to information about developments in welfare policy and implementation nationally and internationally, and to related issues, such as childcare, domestic violence and employment. This page is divided into five sections: education, implementation/implications, families, Rhode Island families/kids & disabilities, learning disabilities, and welfare rights.

**Welfare Reform and Welfare-to-Work: Alternative Strategies and Key Components**
http://www.mdrc.org/InPractice/PresentationOutlines/WelfareToWork/tsld001.htm
Sponsoring Agency: Manpower Demonstration Research Corporation

This slideshow outlines the material presented at the National Conference on Family Literacy on April 19, 1999. The topics include what research says about welfare-to-work strategies, key components and best practices, and how education and family literacy fit into a "work first" approach.

**Workforce Investment Act**
http://novel.nifl.gov/lincs/collections/policy/wia.html
Sponsoring Agency: National Institute for Literacy, LINCS

This site contains information on the act, key resources related to it, and NIFL policy updates.

# Appendix 3
## Even Start Sites

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